



Mitigation Helps Jensen Beach Restaurant Weather Another Storm Season

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Martin County, Florida



Jensen Beach, FL – In October 2005, Hurricane Wilma's high winds tore through the east end of Jensen Beach, Florida, a quiet coastal town in Martin County. The winds ripped off part of a marina roof, collapsed buildings, and demolished a gas station. One building in the town's historic area was completely destroyed. Then the storm hit the 115-year-old building that housed Jan's Place Restaurant.

"It got very cold and very still," said restaurant co-owner Bob Trudel. "Then all of a sudden the wind came with a roar and ripped the top corner of the building off along with most of the rear portion of the roof."

The damage could have been much worse, noted Mr. Trudel, who has operated Jan's Place for the past 14 years with his wife. "All the windows on the second floor were retrofitted in 2003 with hurricane-resistant windows that proved effective in minimizing damage," Mr. Trudel explained.

He and building owner Rodney Fletcher also credit those 29 impact-resistant windows with minimizing building damage in 2004, when Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne caused severe damage to the surrounding buildings and caused power outages that lasted for two weeks. Buildings in the area sustained roof damage, blown-out windows, and extensive damage from wind-driven rain.

"Although we had minor roof damage [during the 2004 storms], the windows kept the wind and rain out and helped keep the roof on, allowing us to open for business just a day or two after each storm," Mr. Trudel recalled. "We were very busy serving lunch to those who were there cleaning up their damaged buildings."

The couple could not re-open their restaurant as quickly after Wilma, Mr. Trudel reflected, "but we would have had a lot more building damage without the hurricane windows."

2005 was the second year in a row that mitigation efforts benefited the Trudels and their business. After Wilma, the Trudels and Fletcher sought to rebuild with mitigation in mind.

Florida building codes require that substantially damaged buildings are brought up to current code standards when they are rebuilt. "We will meet or exceed all the requirements," Mr. Fletcher said. "Even without the codes you have to think forward."

All remaining windows will be fitted with a hurricane-resistant design. The building's rear wall will be reinforced with five vertical beams running from the foundation to the top plate at the roof, and all the second-floor walls will be reinforced by sheathing them with industrial plywood.

"Making the investment now will save us more [money] down the road when other storms come – and they will come," Mr. Fletcher said. "By strengthening the building I can be assured of the best chance of survival of the building, the restaurant, and other tenants."

Mr. Fletcher also noted that by mitigating against hurricane damage while rebuilding, he is also doing his part to help preserve the historic area in which Jan's Place is located, and the sense of community that it helps foster.

"I love this place," Mr. Fletcher said. "There is just something about this building. It's like an old friend. Although it's over 100 years old, when we're done, I feel like the building will stretch out its arms and say, 'Hey, look at me now.'"

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region IV**

State: **Florida**

County: **Martin County**

City/Community: **Jensen Beach**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**

Hazard Type: **Hurricane/Tropical Storm**

Activity/Project Type: **Retrofitting, Non-structural**

Structure Type: **Masonry, Un-reinforced/Plain**

Activity/Project Start Date: **01/2003**

Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**

Funding Source: **Private funds; Property Owner, Commercial**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$30,000.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **No**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**

Year First Tested: **2004**

Repetitive Loss Property? **No**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/mat/mat_fema499.shtm

Reference URL 2: <http://www.floridadisaster.org/>

Main Points

No Main Points were entered.



Jan's Place Restaurant.



Rodney Fletcher and Bob Trudel outside Jan's Place